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PRIZE COMPETITION IN INTERIOR DECORATION.

MESSRS. JOSEPH P. McHUGH & CO., Interior Architects and Decorators, New York, with the view of encouraging the study of interior decoration after pure styles, offer six subjects for competition in THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER. The competition began with the October, 1890, issue, which also commenced the seventeenth volume of our journal. A prize of TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS will be paid by the above firm, for the best original design in the following special styles of ornamental construction and decorative treatment :

LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR COMPETITION.

October, 1890,	-	A COLONIAL RECEPTION ROOM.
		Prize awarded to James Thomson, of Boston.
December, "	-	AN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE DINING ROOM.
		Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
February, 1891,	-	A LOUIS SEIZE DRAWING ROOM.
		Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
April, "	-	A ROMANESQUE HALL.
		Prize awarded to J. W. Bliss, Providence, R. I.
June, "	-	AN ADAMS LIBRARY.
		Prize awarded to James Thomson, Philadelphia, Pa.
August, "	-	A LOUIS QUINZE BOUDOIR.

CONDITIONS.

1.—Each competitive design must be 15 inches by 10 in size. The drawing must be executed by the pen in black ink, and sent us flat, not rolled up.

2.—Working charts, drawn to a scale, may be sent in lieu of a perspective drawing. At least two charts should be sent showing different sides of the room.

2.—Each drawing must be original, and should include suggestions for wall decoration, draperies and furniture, after the style of its period, but adapted to modern construction and requirements.

3.—Each drawing must be signed with a *nom de plume*, and accompanied by a letter giving the real name and address of the designer. All designs must be addressed to the Editor of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, 150 Nassau Street, New York, and must reach the office not later than the 15th of the month previous to that for which the competition is announced; thus, drawings for the June, 1891, competition, should reach the Editor not later than the 15th of May, 1891.

5.—A committee of decorative artists will decide as to which design is entitled to the prize in each competition, as well as those entitled to honorable mention, and their decision will be final.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE fifth subject for our prize competition in interior decoration is an Adam's Library, and after due consideration of the drawings sent us by decorators and designers, the drawings sent by Mr. James Thomson, of Philadelphia, have been awarded the prize.

We publish on the opposite page Mr. Thomson's chart for one side of the library, and the supplementary drawings, which are in perspective and which show further details of the design, are unavoidably held over until our July issue, for want of space.

Elsewhere in the present issue of our journal we give an illustrated description of Adam decoration, which calls attention to the ornate details of the style.

In Mr. Thomson's design the woodwork and furniture are to be wrought in finely figured Mexican mahogany, finished in the natural color. The ornamentation on same is to be carving in low relief and marquetry. The inlay is to be in low-toned colored woods, such as satin, rosewood and thuya wood, and brass lines are also introduced.

The walls have panels on a golden brown ground, the ornament being in gold, olive green and reds. The frieze is Vandyke brown, the ornaments being produced in gold and silver in low relief.

The chairs are upholstered in leather of a russet olive color, studded with plain brass nails. The draperies are to be of the same tone, with gold decoration.

THE Adams style is one of those peculiar methods of decorative treatment, the value of which depends entirely upon the point of view from which it is considered.

From one standpoint the style is artificial, and is a deterioration of the Greek style, and betrays all the weakness, with none of the grandeur, of the Greek spirit. It is an attempt to revive classic ornament without the classic spirit, and is, therefore merely the moribund shell of the departed soul.

From another standpoint it is a style of exquisite delicacy, founded on the Pompeian style, which was itself a Colonial transplantation of Greek ornament, and its forms, associated with agreeable colors, imparts a lightness and freshness to an apartment, making it a style of decoration eminently suitable for boudoirs and bedrooms.

In the hands of an expert modern designer there is no doubt but that the style may be developed into very pleasing results, and Mr. Thomson's sketch is commendable from the fact that he has preserved the best features of the style without accepting the degenerations with which it is too frequently overloaded.

A library or other apartment decorated in this spirit cannot fail to be beautiful, and we command the prize design in the present issue to lovers of classical ornament, as possessing a lightness and beauty that is not to be found in the more somber manifestations of the Greek style. As a style of ornament it seems particularly suited to inlaid work, its forms being exquisitely subordinated to the more bold and vigorous outlines of the piece of furniture itself. Such a union of grace and dignity cannot fail to be beautiful, and the style has, doubtless, a future in this direction, if not in the actual decoration of the walls themselves.

WHEN newly married people begin life on a moderate income, they naturally desire to keep up with their neighbors in the matter of house furnishings. This is sometimes a very difficult problem, when the finances are not sufficient to sustain the desire for being surrounded by luxurious appointments.

Where such is the case, and where a sacrifice in some direction should be made, we would like to point out the essentials that stamp the refined household, and what are really the non-essentials.

Of course all people in more or less comfortable circumstances will have a servant, and the possession of one servant, at least, is one of the prime requisites in refined house furnishing. But, apart from the servant, there is the furnishing of the parlor, the drawing-room, the dining-room, the library, and what not, to be considered. Which of these apartments, then, is the most essential to have finely furnished, and which ought we to economize most upon?

We make bold to say that the furnishing of none of these apartments in good style is the essential thing required. The most important thing in interior decoration, the primary, fundamental requisite of all is the decoration of the dining-room table.

It does not matter what kind of food is eaten thereat; the great question is the outer style and appearance of the table and its appointments. It is indispensable that the linen, the china, the glass, and the silver should be good of their kind, and all bright and inviting.

It is of more importance that a lady should dress her table than that she should dress herself. If a woman cannot afford more than two or three new gowns a year, her parsimony in this respect will not stamp her as unrefined, whereas parsimony in the table appointments marks the difference between the vulgarian and the woman of refinement, between whom there is a great gulf fixed.

Costly furniture is not an essential of refined surroundings. Simple cretonne furniture, muslin curtains, a few pretty rugs and portières, books, magazines, some good engravings and a few flowers can give a room that atmosphere that is inseparable from the presence of people of culture.

Economize, therefore, anywhere else, but on the dining room table. The young housekeeper who feels herself safe in the matter of dining-room appointments, need not hesitate to return invitations extended to her by people whose style of living is beyond her own.

THE designs for the decoration of a drawing-room published in the present issue exhibit what the highest taste is capable of producing in the matter of interior decoration.

By referring to the ground plan of the apartment, it will be seen that the various pieces of furniture are artistically arranged upon the floor, each piece having its own particular use. It will be observed that there is no easel bearing up a picture, the four sharp corners of whose frame is a constant menace to the comfort of the inmates of the house. There is no rickety table supporting a group of Rodger's statuettes, nor is there an ungainly and unwarrantable piano lamp to interfere with one's freedom of movement.

The carpet, as will be seen is a simple square with a wide border, laid upon the floor without attempting to fill up the irregularities of the wall surface, the floor in such cases being either painted, or covered with a plain filling of carpet. The center of the panel in the carpet has no ornament of any kind, which affords the necessary relief to the eye from the variety of the furnishings placed thereon, and also contrasts with the ornamentation of the border.

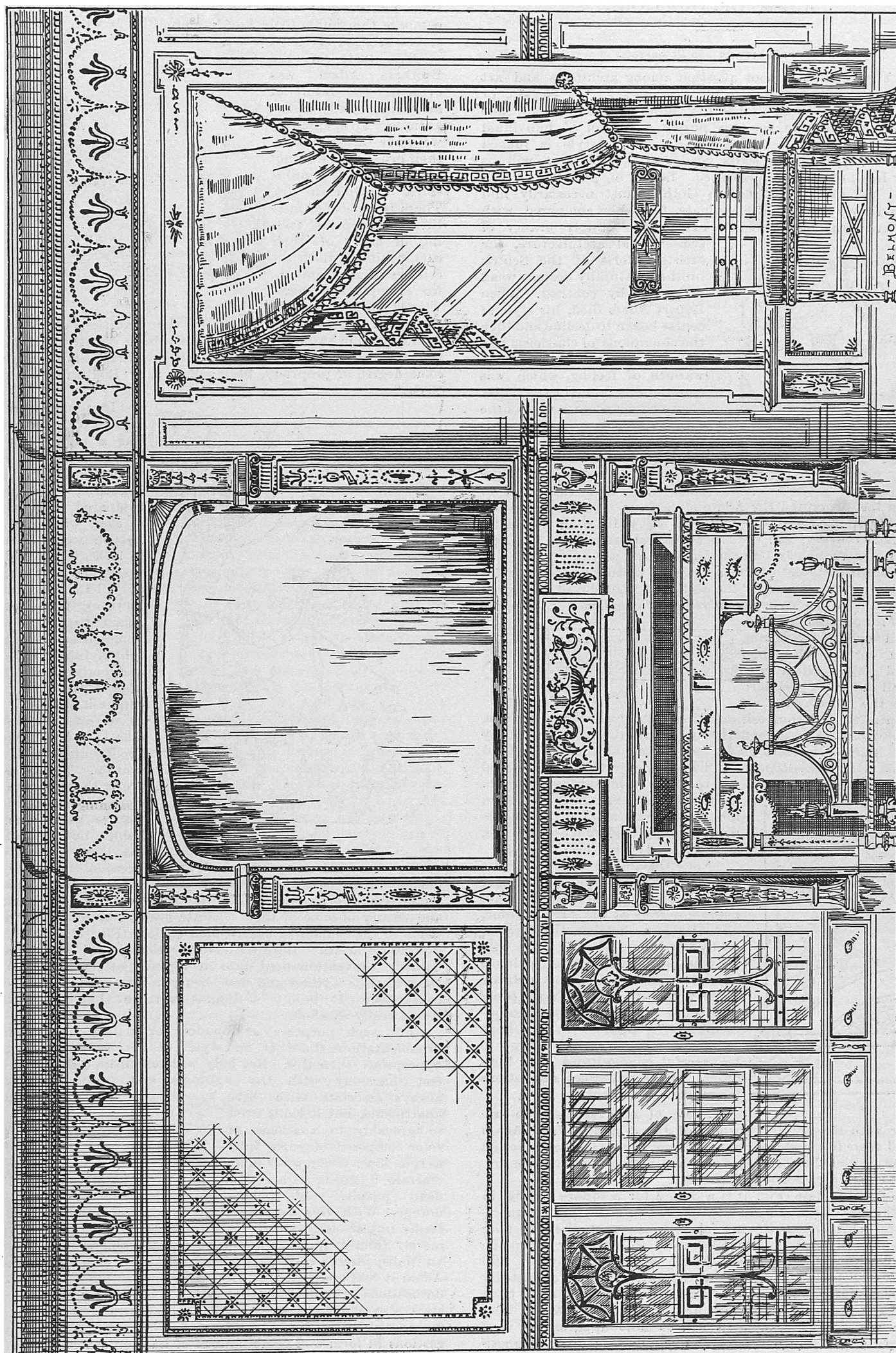
In the shapes of the furniture, shown in the decorative charts for the four walls of the apartment, it will be seen that very fine curves are introduced in harmony with the prevailing idea of the decorations, which is a union of the Japanese and Renaissance styles, neither style being insisted upon in its extreme phases.

In these charts, as described in the article referring thereto, the tapestries are embroidered with laurel trees in the Japanese style. Japanese curves will also be seen in the hanging vases, and the grotesque brackets that support the beams of the ceiling. The style otherwise is Renaissance. The various panels in the frieze have wreaths of flowers, and the stained glass panels are filled with festoons of jewels. The top of the mantel-piece over the fire is carved with floral festoons, while the tops of the various wall panels are finished off with narrow lambrequins, embroidered with festoons representing pearls and jewels.

The festoon is the foremost motive in European art, and is a peculiarly joyous and graceful motive—perhaps the most graceful we possess in all decorative art.

In the upholstery of the furniture there will be seen embroidery representing festoons of jewels, or pearls hung by slender cords. The general effect of such an interior as we illustrate is superb. This breaking up of the wall surface into a plentiful play of light and shadow affords the greatest joy to the eye, because nothing worries us and makes us feel so forlorn and chill as a great, staring, flat, blank wall surface, from which the plasterers would seem to have run away after they had wiped their last trowel upon its surface, as from a scene of horror.

The breaking up of the wall surface into panel effects, filled with painted or embroidered tapestries, and covering the doors and windows also with such tapestries, suited for portieres or draperies, and the alternation of windows letting light into the apartment with decorative mirrors, and these elements reinforced with frieze effects containing panels of stained glass, painted tapestry, and panels of mirrors, alternating with grotesquely carved caryatides supporting the beams of the ceiling, all form an ensemble of the greatest magnificence and grace.



AN ADAMS LIBRARY.—PRIZE DESIGN, BY JAMES THOMSON, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

(The Supplementary Drawings will appear next month.)